

President's so-called surge, the escalation of troops into Iraq, was that Iraqi forces would actually be on the front lines, while American troops would be providing support.

In fact, a White House fact sheet from the day the President announced escalation, says that the primary element of the strategy is to let the Iraqis lead.

Well, the escalation has begun, and not only are they not leading, we are lucky if they even show up. That is right. Reportedly, as many as 50 percent of the Iraqi troops expected and needed for the Baghdad operation aren't reporting to duty. This doesn't bode well, Madam Speaker. American troops will now bear the brunt of what promises to be deadly, violent, urban warfare.

We are now finding out that the escalation will be twice as large as the President has said, requiring 48,000 additional troops, as opposed to 21,000, as originally announced by the President. Now, if Iraqis aren't prepared for the fight, it is easy to imagine still more U.S. soldiers being sent into the grinder. The surge has barely begun, and already, it is failing.

It is clear, furthermore, that the Maliki government is powerless to live up to its promises. Maliki himself owes much of his political authority to one of Iraq's most powerful militia leaders. So how, exactly, is he going to keep Iraqi communities safe from the militias?

On their way out the door, General Abizaid and General Casey warned that increasing force levels just absolves Iraqis of the responsibility for their own security, and they were absolutely right.

In the State of the Union address, the President said, and I quote him, "... it's time for [the Iraqi] government to act. They have promised to deploy more of their own troops to secure Baghdad . . . They pledged that they will confront violent radicals of any faction . . . and they need to follow through."

If they don't, where is the "or else" in the President's words, and where are the consequences if they don't meet these benchmarks and honor these commitments?

Madam Speaker, it is time for fewer carrots and more sticks. Edward Luttwak of the Center for Strategic and International Studies put it succinctly. He said, "it's time for the Iraqis to make their own history." Or, in the words of Luttwak's New York Times op-ed piece yesterday, he said, "To Help Iraq, Let It Fend for Itself."

There is only one solution, a quick military withdrawal from Iraq. I have a bill that was sponsored by 33 other Members of Congress that will do precisely that. H.R. 508, the Bring Our Troops Home and Iraq Sovereignty Restoration Act will do exactly what we need. It will take our troops out of harm's way and force Iraqis to secure their own country. We won't leave

them high and dry. The bill calls for an international stabilization force, but one that would come only at the request of the Iraqi government for no more than 2 years, and with other nations taking on the burden as well.

H.R. 508 will have our troops home in 6 months, leaving behind no permanent military bases and turning over control of the Iraqi oil to the Iraqi people. We will not abandon Iraq. We will continue to be a partner in the reconciliation and reconstruction, but it is time for us to end the military occupation that has failed so tragically. There are no good answers here, but one thing is for sure: There is nothing more our soldiers can do to bring peace to the streets of Baghdad or any other part of Iraq. If anything, our continued presence is aggravating an already combustible situation, which, in fact, we created. We created this situation with our invasion in the first place. Madam Speaker, it is time for Iraqis to defend Iraq, and it is time for American troops to come home.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Mr. DREIER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. DREIER addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

#### HONORING TAYLOR SIAS AND KEVIN TEMPLAN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from West Virginia (Mrs. CAPITO) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. CAPITO. Madam Speaker, I rise today to talk about two outstanding youths in my district and to highlight, I think, something that we do too rarely here and across America. We talk a lot about our young people in their teens playing video games, not getting involved in their communities, not trying new sports, not enjoying the outdoors.

Today I am very privileged to talk about two such individuals in my district who are breaking the mold and are, I think, achieving at high levels, but they are also doing it by enjoying the great outdoors and also bringing strength to their communities.

First, I would like to recognize Taylor Sias from Weston, West Virginia, for representing our State in the 2007 Bassmaster CastingKids National Semi-Finals Competition in Gadsden, Alabama.

Taylor is a sixth grade student at Robert L. Bland Middle School in Weston and is a three-time State champion. Taylor previously competed in the 2004 semifinals in Tulsa, Oklahoma, and in the 2005 semifinals in Orlando, Florida. The Bassmaster CastingKids challenge is to flip, pitch and cast a hookless lure into a bull's eye target. Sounds kind of hard to me.

BASS developed the Bassmaster CastingKids program in 1991, open to

young people in two age groups, 7-10 and 11-14. The goals of this competition are to involve America's youth in fishing and to foster in each participant an appreciation and a concern for our outdoors. Participants compete in local events conducted by affiliated BASS federation national clubs. Local event winners proceed to their State finals where each State then determines two to represent their State at the national semifinals. From the national semifinals, only 10 contenders advance on to the national championship. Since its inception, over 1.5 million youth have participated in the program, and over \$2 million in cash prizes and scholarships have been awarded.

I would again like to congratulate Taylor and thank him for proudly representing West Virginia at the 2007 Bassmaster CastingKids National Semifinals Championship and wish him the best of luck in becoming an accomplished angler.

Madam Speaker, the other youth I would like to talk about today is Kevin Templan of Charlestown, West Virginia. Kevin became the first member of Boy Scout Troop 82 to achieve the rank of Eagle Scout. His commitment to family and community and church played an integral part in this achievement. Kevin worked on a beautification project at Saint Peter's Catholic Cemetery for his Eagle Scout project.

He is recognized by the Boy Scout National Honor Society, Order of the Arrows, for adhering to the traditions and values of scouting. A senior at Jefferson County High School, Kevin is a drummer in the Cougar Marching Band. He attends Saint James Greater Catholic Church where he will soon be a member of the Knights of Columbus. Kevin enjoys reading, origami and spending time with his younger brother and sister.

The Templan family recently moved to my district from Bryan, Texas, and we welcome them. I would like to take this opportunity to extend a warm West Virginia welcome to Kevin and his family. Jefferson County is fortunate to host such an accomplished young leader. It is a pleasure to serve such devoted young citizens like Kevin in West Virginia's Second District.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. ELLISON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. ELLISON addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. KAGEN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. KAGEN addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. ENGLISH) is recognized for 5 minutes.